

Dear Parents,

Welcome to First Grade! Your child has embarked on a truly exciting learning adventure here at Kolter Elementary! I am thrilled to have you and your child in our classroom family and will be working to provide a productive, motivating school year. I look forward to sharing that endeavor with you to help your child to become a lifelong learner. Hopefully, this letter will help you understand what to expect this year and answer questions you may have.

Communication I believe that a good parent-teacher relationship is essential to help each child reach their full potential. I encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with me. My daily planning period is from 12:30-1:00 (other meetings are scheduled to meet with the team and administration throughout the week during this time as well). Please email me at sbrown38@houstonisd.org if you wish to arrange a conference or need to speak to me regarding any matter. Please understand that I cannot conference with you, even casually, when class is in session or during arrival or dismissal time. Also, please be aware that I am only able to check my email before school, during my planning period, and after dismissal. I will do my best to reply to your email within 24 hours.

Behavior Management Establishing good classroom discipline is essential to each child's success, confidence and well-being. Every child should feel that the classroom environment is safe and secure: free from all threats of physical or emotional harm. In addition, it is important that each child learn to develop self-discipline and good work habits, to resolve conflicts peacefully, and to think independently. In my classroom, the children will learn the purpose of classroom rules and develop the idea that our classroom is a community with the common purpose of learning, growing, and becoming friends. We treat each other with respect and dignity at all times. I expect my students to be respectful to adults throughout the building, to walk quietly (level 0) through the halls, and use inside voices (Levels 1 and 2) in the classroom, cafeteria, and other common school areas.

Through class discussion, the children and I have discussed five classroom rules which protect each student's right to safety and respect and outline the responsibilities each child has in maintaining class order:

Our Rules/Agreements:

- #1. Listen when the speaker is talking.
- #2. Follow directions quickly.
- #3. Respect others. Respect yourself. Respect our school.
- #4. Raise your hand to speak or stand.
- #5. Be safe. Be kind. Be honest.

The discipline plan I use has several components. I use a **clip chart system** to monitor behavior throughout the day. Every child begins the day with his or her clip on "**Awesome**". After an occurrence of a child making a poor decision (i.e. breaking a classroom rule), he or she will receive a **verbal warning** and guidance on how to make a better choice. If he/she continues with the behavior

after the first warning, he/she will be asked to **move his/her clip to "Great" then "Ready to learn"**. On the fourth encounter, (or after an extreme incidence occurs that warrants immediate discipline without warning), the child is asked to **move his/her clip to the bottom of the chart to "Think about it"**. When a child has moved his/her clip to "Parent Contact", it is the teacher's choice on how to communicate with the parent about the incident. This may be in the form of an email, a phone call, **or the Kolter Blue Folders**, or any combination of the three. **It is CRITICAL that the blue folders be reviewed that night with you, signed, and returned the next day.**

My discipline plan includes logical consequences, which will occur when class rules are broken. Examples of logical consequences include a time away from the group for disruptions or bothering other children during learning time, taking time to think at recess time as they walk a lap around the blacktop, so as to still be outside moving and getting blood flow, offering verbal apologies or an "I'm Sorry Note" for aggressive behavior, name-calling, or ridicule towards another, etc. The idea is for the consequence to be related to the misbehavior and to be discussed and decided upon between teacher and student. A visit to the principal's office is a rarely used last resort.

Curriculum We follow the HISD scope and sequence, which includes a planning guide detailing what Texas Essentials Knowledge Skills (TEKS) we are to teach and when they are to be taught. Our team uses several resources to accomplish these goals: Scholastic (language arts), Words Their Way (Spelling), Daily 5 Literacy Stations, CAFÉ, Guided Reading and small group instruction, BUILD Math stations, Go- Math, Fusion Science).

Our Class Schedule:

7:45- Tardy Bell Rings

Pledges/ Announcements

Morning Meeting

8:10- Reading and Language Arts Block

10:30- Recess

11:05- Lunch

11:35- Science and Social Studies

12:20- Magnet Classes

1:10- Math Block

3:05- Dismissal

Arrival Students will meet in the cafeteria for breakfast or go to the playground in the mornings. After 7:45am, students are considered tardy. Please note that tardies are recorded on the report card. Being on time is an important start to a successful day! I ask that you say your good-byes at cafeteria drop off and allow your child to enter and begin his/her day on his own. Let's work together to foster independence and confidence in your child.

Absences School is very important, but if your child is sick, they must stay at home. Children should be "fever free" for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is absent, please send an email or note in their yellow folder explaining the reason for the absence within three days after your child returns to school. These emails/notes are required for documentation. Absences are considered unexcused until a note is received.

Volunteers and Parent Involvement I thoroughly welcome and encourage parent participation through our volunteer program. Parents can help in so many ways; sharing their talents and skills, reading to students, assisting with special projects and tasks, chaperoning field trips, and more. Throughout the year, there will be a variety of special classroom activities and celebrations. I encourage you to attend these functions when possible and to support them by sending needed supplies. Your support of school activities makes your child feel important and sends the message that you value school. It is imperative that your child remain involved in classroom activities and follow classroom rules and expectations when you are here.

Before you can volunteer in the classroom or chaperone field trips, **you must be cleared through VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools)**. You can begin this process online at www.houstonisd.org. You will then need to go by the office as soon as possible and **submit your drivers license for a background check**. I encourage you to begin this process as soon as possible. Sometimes it takes a while and we don't want anyone turned away!

Security Your child's safety is of prime importance at Kolter! Therefore, **all visitors must sign in and have a pass from the office to be in the building**. We adhere to this policy for the safety and security of our students. Please do not be offended if you are asked to go to the office for a visitor's badge. Take comfort knowing that it is a policy set in place for your child's safety. ☺

Birthdays Birthdays are special occasions for young children. If your child wishes, he/she may bring individually pre-packaged, store bought treats for the entire class (one per child-25 total). We want the birthday boy/girl to be able to hand out treats independently or with little help. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school **unless the entire class has been invited**. Although it may seem convenient to distribute invitations this way, it can result in hurt feelings.

I hope this information proves to be useful. Please keep it handy, as a quick and easy reference throughout the year. I am so excited about getting to know your child and you, as well. Thank you in advance for all of the support and for the opportunity to be your child's stepping stone to a lifelong learning adventure!

Sincerely,

Sarah Brown